The Grange Upper Clapton
April 26. 1844

My dear Friend

Your letter has lain in my writing-case for I fear many months I will not say waiting for its answer. It is written, and on this lovely morning in April which is like a May day of the poets I sit as it were among green leaves & flowers to address you. Thank you warmly for your pleasant letter & thank you too for your charming book. Do you know that this same book is reprinted in London - & greatly admired - & - & what do you think? - in London it is dedicated to me - yet there stands on its first page these words "To Mary Howitt one of the spirits chosen by Heaven to turn the sunny side of things to human eyes." This volume is most affectionately inscribed by the Author: All this properly displayed in printers ink, according to the established mode of dedication stands on the first page. A kind friend of mine who greatly admiring your writings ordered the book immediately sent it to me & gave me of course a most pleasant surprise - in a day or two afterwards came also a couple of copies from the London publisher with a polite

In looking over my letter dear Mrs Child I am ashamed to see what a selfish letter it is - all about myself & mine - & I really believe now I think of it that I wrote just such a letter the last time. Will you remember to thank our friend [illegible] for me & do me the great kindness to ~~the~~ send me - or rather I should write us which is the whole Howitt family - a full & detailed account of yourselves - all your ways & your cares. That you do not object to put on paper - & say are you living altogether now in New-York? & tell us any thing that at the moment interests you - & if you do this I shall believe that you do not think me the most egotistical person in existence.

Adieu

note & begging my acceptance of them. Now whether this be his doing or yours, I am I must say much pleased & honoured - I rather suspect he has a hand in it because it does not appear in the authentic American edition which you were good enough to lend me & for which I thank you - but still more for the handsome & kind way in which you speak of me. We all like your book - it is very original & bold-spirited - which is something now-a-days - but what I like best in it is its beautiful, christian tone of feeling - Oh what an earth this would be if there were only love & goodness in it! Well, thank God my friend that you are one of those whose mission it is to call forth love & goodness in the hearts of others!

When your letter & book came we had one beautiful spirit by our fireside who since then has gone home to his kindred spirits in heaven! He heard your book read & enjoyed it with us. Sometime perhaps when my heart is calmer than this great affliction has left it - I may try to sketch the life & character of this dear child of ours - as yet we are all suffering too deeply from the wound of his loss to do other than mourn. Hardly more than twelve months ago we left him for a few months in Germany till we had our English home ready to receive him & the other children - a practical John which had been played upon him had as we thought sprained his knee, but we were scarcely anxious - for he had always been so sound of health that we could not fear for him - But alas! the injury was most serious - We left him as he had always been - full of life & fun - the wittiest & the happiest & the cleverest boy we ever knew. In three months his papa fetched him home - apparently he was not much changed - but there was however a great change in him - He came home, cheerful it is true - but saddened & graver as if years had gone over him - after this he never laughed & but rarely smiled - the rest of his life - nine months was literally a quiet ascension to Heaven - My eyes are full of tears - & my heart aches - & I cannot write of him - Enough to say - & you will sympathise with us - he died leaving ~~him~~ behind him a memory of light which like a golden chain unites us with heaven. Thank God, our other children are all well & with us at home. We have a young German living with us who instills the classics & mathematics & French & music & German & heaven knows what more into the two boys - & who sits at this moment reading under an apple-tree in my sight whilst they are busy watering the garden within his view - All promises well in them & for them & with the blessing of God & we hope will grow so - Our eldest & our youngest are girls - If I were to write all I think of our first born you would think I was sketching an angel's character so I say nothing - She & her father often in fun talk of setting off to America if they should in reality do it how glad will they be to know you personally - I must not omit in my family group the youngest - the little household pet - Margaret - a thorough ideal of a little girl - neat & loving & tidy & with a delicate sense of all kind of proprieties - Bless her! when the others have all begun life for themselves I expect she will be the comfort & joy of our age! - Thus it is that in every way & in every thing one is always laying out plans for the future - yet one knows not what even a day may unfold.

My husband unites with me in kind regards to you so does my daughter & believe me ever

my dear friend
yours truly
Mary Howitt

Mary Howit
The Authoress
From
L. M. Child
New York

Mrs Child
New York
United States

Mary Howitt

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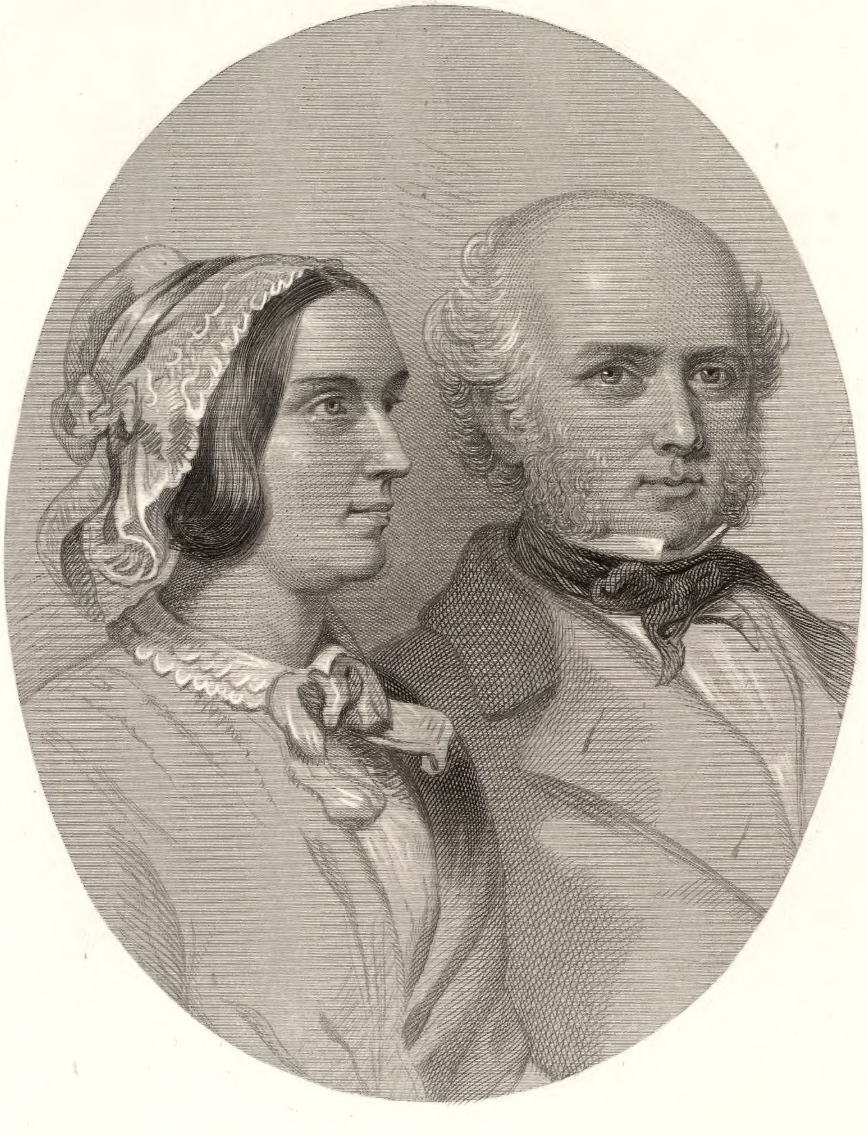

Mary & William Howitt

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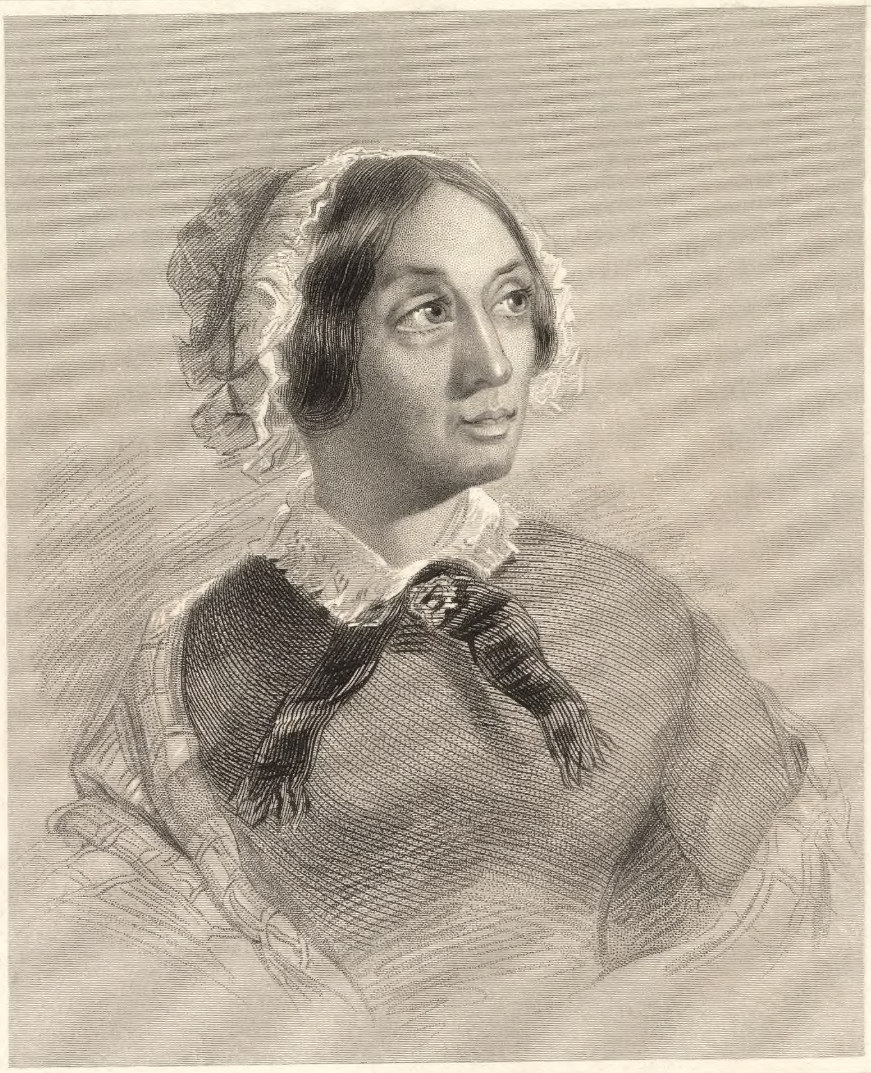

T. J. Hughes. J. B. Hunt.

Mary Howitt.

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